

**REGULAR MEETING  
MARCH 3, 2014**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, March 3, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

Present: Councilors Hemmann, Hurley, Kotkin, Manousos, Martino, Rell, Roberts, Deputy Mayor Barry, and Chairperson Montinieri

Also present: Peter Gillespie, Planning, Parks & Recreation, Kathy Bagley, Finance Director, Michael O'Neil, Director, Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk

Deputy Mayor Barry led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Mayor Montinieri announced that there will be an Executive Session after the meeting to discuss personnel matters.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Ave., wanted to set the record straight and the residents on Morrison Avenue chose the design of the construction walk from Wolcott Hill Road to Orchard. The residents never endorsed the construction and the reconstruction of the sidewalk east of Orchard. Briefly, he described the construction project. The Town is responsible to provide residents with safe traffic conditions. Also, he discussed required distances for posted speeds.

Paul Copp, 100 Executive Square commented the Town Council has no authority as to how the monies are spent by the Board of Education. Also, the Town Council cannot provide the Board of Education less monies as provided last year by state statute. A School Resource Officer should be at the town expense and under the Chief of Police. The Superintendent does not have experience in law safety. He noted the Superintendent is a smart guy. He will certainly make do with last year's budget. He suggested they will be fine. By doing this and a few other things similar to this, the town budget can also remain the same as or below last year.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Rd., commented that the grand list is dropping by 5.6, and wondered about our taxes going forward into this next year. If we see the mill rate go up it's going to startle everybody. It should be zero if not less. He commented on another hefty increase with the Board of Education of about 3.89%. There are numbers that can be squeezed and reduced. He suggested several newspaper articles regarding the fiscal condition of the State of Connecticut.

**COUNCIL REPORTS**

Councilor Hurley reported on a grant received for the Recreation Department for the Nature Center. Nature centers from around the will come in to evaluate our nature center. He and others

met with them. They want to keep it self-funding but also get the town more involved. They would like a way to move it forward and use the area with our river.

Also the dredging started at the Cove. Coast Guard Cutter or Breaker came up the river, broke up the ice, brought and the dredging equipment here.

Councilor Hurley commented that Channel 14 is looking for volunteers to help with taping of events, producing or hosting shows, typing up announcements, returning calls from the public, making copies of DVDs and anything else a television station would do.

Councilor Kotkin reported Library Director Laurel Goodgion, after 12 years will be retiring mid-year. A search committee has been formed to look for a new Library Director. They will be looking for some public input. They are using a salary range of \$92,000 to \$105,000 per year which is comparable to what the current director is earning. The hope is they will have someone new prior to Laurel's actual departure for a reasonable transition.

Councilor Kotkin reported the Library Board approved a budget with a 7% increase. Some of it is driven by the allocations the town has assigned to working at the Library. They [workers] actually get a larger proportionate share of higher pension costs. We are seeing it as we go through the budget. In addition to that, they are actually looking to have a full-time teen Librarian, and trying to do a little more in terms of computer replacement. As they go through the budget, they will be addressing that increase. This is the budget presented by the Library Board and Director to the Budget Committee last week.

Councilor Kotkin reported on the Insurance Committee and stated the good news continues. The town is looking at virtually no increase in health care costs for next year. After rapid increases in health insurance costs for the town for about five or six years ago, we have actually seen three years in reductions in health care costs and I think an aggregate has been in excess of \$1,000,000 a year, so it has been a very good story in the town budget lately. It is driven by not only good experience meaning our town employees have been healthier; we also have fewer town employees to insure. Also it is a result of the work we have done over the last five to seven years in terms of increasing the co-pays for town employees must make toward their insurance and deductibles as well.

Councilor Kotkin reported the Budget Committee did meet and heard from our auditors on a clean audit. They had praise for the finance personnel and the finance professionals within the town. There were a few recommendations both on the town side and Board side that will be forwarded. Councilor Kotkin explained we are going to be hearing from the Board of Education on their budget; and then we would probably have a Saturday to go through much of the Town Manager's budget.

Deputy Mayor Barry reported that the Building Committee met last week as well and reported the asbestos abatement was completed over the February break. He stated the air quality was good and obviously our gyms are open and they are back to their regular schedules.

Councilor Roberts is the Liaison to the Historical Society and they met last week. She reported it is a very active Board and they were thrilled to see someone there from the Council. Their big event is coming up on April 12<sup>th</sup>, The Taste of Wethersfield a major fundraiser. If you become a patron it starts at 6:00 p.m. and if you buy a general ticket, it starts at 7:00 p.m. They have expanded the types of food and the representatives so they are looking forward to having good participation, as usual. They are working on a marketing report, have quite a few activities as they are an active Board. She is happy to be there.

Councilor Martino reported the Wethersfield Advisory Committee with People with Disabilities met on February 19<sup>th</sup> and discussed the upcoming legislative workshop on February 25<sup>th</sup>. People may attend and discuss the needs of individuals with disabilities. Also, they spoke of the problems after the snow storms: people weren't cleaning the walks; and the curb cuts weren't cleared so people could get across the street. They would like to see that improved. They discussed Millwoods Park and the need for a family bathroom that would be not just to help with the kids but for spouses to help each other especially where there are seniors involved. Their next meeting will be at the Church Home Village to go over the transportation needs of citizens.

Councilor Martino reported he met with the Senior Citizens Advisory Commission and reported they will be having their Annual Corn Beef and Cabbage Dinner in March; \$7.00 per person. They were also working on their Trails Fair for May 19<sup>th</sup> guest speaker will there from Tourism. The trails include wine trail, the chocolate trail and a few others. They are putting a good program together for the seniors; people will be able to see what's available within our State and visit around the State on vacations.

Councilor Martino reported that the Infrastructure Committee met and reviewed three STEAP grants that will be presented tonight. 1. a combination façade loan and one for redevelopment for demolition funds for a grand total of \$450,000--\$250,000 for façade loans and the other \$200,000 for possible demolition if it is needed. Façade Loan Program has done wonders for us over the years. He stated that over the past nine years, we have done 26 projects which have cost \$743.00 and what this does is it gives a return on investment to us. He stated that for every dollar that goes in there is \$6.00 in private investment that goes to offset that and it has increased the valuations \$3.2 million for an average of \$160,000 per project. He stated that with that one grant, if all of the money or none of the money is needed for that redevelopment demolition we could go back to the State to get that reallocated towards façade loans so that we could use it for that which would be a good thing.

2. a second grant is for improvements at the ~~Standard~~ *Standish* House to upgrade the site work exterior painting ADA things and that is for \$496,000. 3. the third grant will be for implementation for improvements to the Solomon Welles House and will take care of electrical upgrades in the park near there and parking lot and drainage improvements the total is \$386,000. This will help with affairs that are handled down by the Solomon Welles like the carnival and also with the Farmers Market meeting. These are three projects that will all help with economic development in this town.

### COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor Hurley reported that the St. Patrick's Day Parade is coming up and Wethersfield has a lot of involvement in it. The high school marching band, Griffith Dance Academy, the Police and Fire Department, public officials and the Colonel John Chester Fife and Drum Core will be there. It is on March 15<sup>th</sup>, Saturday at 11:00 a.m. and he hopes to see everybody come out.

Councilor Roberts commented that Mike is being very modest and works very hard to get the St. Patrick's Day Parade coordinated for Wethersfield. In fact, this year his work is being recognized and he has been selected as the Deputy ~~Marshall~~ *Marshal* for the entire parade. It is a huge honor and we are very proud of you and she congratulated him.

Councilor Roberts then recognized and wished Mayor Montinieri a Happy Birthday.

Councilor Roberts reported that on February 27<sup>th</sup> she attended the Wethersfield Game Club Dinner and the Mayor, Donna and Jeff Bridges were also there. It was a packed house and the food was delicious and it was just a wonderful night. People you don't see at other events were there and it was a privilege and joy to be there.

Councilor Manousos asked Councilor Martino to explain about the triangular purchase purchased separately.

Councilor Martino explained there is a triangle on the Wilkus property that was bought separately, the Town may incorporate it into the right-of-way for Old Reservoir Road.

It could be used to give the clearance to extend the road if necessary so it has been referred to the town attorney to see what would be necessary to do that. He stated that we will probably see that on a future committee's agenda to be reviewed again.

### TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Bridges commented that in the audience tonight is Mike O'Neil and he is the new Finance Director as of 9:00 a.m. this morning. Mr. Bridges stated that he has had a very busy day. He commented that they went through the Pension Committees and other things and wanted to introduce him to the Council and welcome him to Wethersfield.

Mayor Montinieri welcomed Mike O'Neil to the Town of Wethersfield.

### COUNCIL ACTION

Deputy Mayor Barry moved **"TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION AS THE MUNICIPAL AGENT FOR CHILDREN OF NANCY STILWELL EFFECTIVE 3-14-2014 TO 6-30-2015"**, seconded by Councilor Roberts.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Barry moved **“TO ACCEPT THE FOLLOWING APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS, THE TOURISM COMMISSION LISA WALSH, 51 CENTER STREET 3-3-2014 TO 6-30-2016, TO THE CENTRAL CONNECTICUT HEALTH DISTRICT, ANGELA COLANTONIO, 16 MORRISON AVE. TERM 3-3-2014 TO 6-30-14 AND THERESA URBANSKI, 46 MARMOR COURT 3-3-2014 TO 6-30-2016 AND TO THE COX CABLE TELEVISION ADVISORY COUNCIL, RICHARD GARREY, 35 HARDING STREET, TERM 3-3-2014 TO 6-30-2016”**, seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Councilor Kotkin commented it is good to get these roles filled on the Central Connecticut Health District because we only had one of our three spots filled and if that person, Diane Doot, wasn't present, the Board really couldn't meet because they need to have representation from each town. He is glad that we have a couple of people stepping up here.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Hemmann moved **“TO APPOINT TO THE INSURANCE COMMISSION TO FILL A VACANCY, ROBERT COBB, 99 MEADOWVIEW FOR A PERIOD OF 3-3-2014 TO 6-30-2014. ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS AN ALTERNATE TO FILL A VACANCY MICHAEL VIEIRA, 116 BLACK BIRCH FROM 3-3-2014 TO 6-30-2014”**, seconded by Councilor Rell.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

#### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor Martino moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO SUBMIT THE STEAP GRANT PROPOSAL AS REQUIRED”**, seconded by Councilor Barry.

Mr. Bridges explained that the Infrastructure Committee reviewed three STEAP grant proposals with the staff. He stated that Peter Gillespie, Sally Katz and Kathy Bagley are the stewards of those three specific grants and are here this evening to answer any specific questions. Mr. Bridges explained that \$450,000 is for façade loan redevelopment funds, \$496,000 request for Standish House ADA upgrades and site work exterior painting improvements and at the Solomon Welles House electrical upgrades and parking lot improvements. Mr. Bridges stated that we prioritized those as is required under the STEAP program for multiple submissions and those are the in priority order. He stated that we would be happy to answer any questions or if you would like to hear any specifics from the interested parties on any of those.

Councilor Hemmann commented that she thinks they are three good projects but is sorry that the Solomon Welles House is number 3 in priority. She thinks it is a facility that is used by and belongs to the community. She thinks the upgrades would certainly be of definite value for all of the different activities that take place there throughout the year such as the Farmers Market, carnival, and concerts. She stated the parking lot is a disaster, if there is any moisture in that area it becomes a pond. We have experienced that numerous times. Regarding the first grant for the Façade Loan Program she is against putting the Façade Loan and the potential demolition of the 1000 Silas Deane property. She would like to take \$120,000 of it and put that with the Solomon Welles so it brings it down to two grants. She thinks it is unlikely that we will get three. We have seen in the past, we can prioritize them to whatever we think is the most important, but they don't always regard it when they are looking at them. Or they chose what our priority might be. Thirdly in regards to the Standish House, just looking at what the long-term plan is with that building, and I know we have asked this before, how much have we spent over the past five years in maintenance costs. She knows that Physical Services gets calls frequently to do certain repairs or things on site. What do all those things add up to and how much have we spent on that building in the last five years. We know the normal day-to-day kind of things that take people away from other things to deal with issues there. She thinks it would be helpful to understand the needs of that building further.

Mayor Montinieri asked Peter Gillespie if he can give us a feel for what our experience has been with the submissions historically and how many we have submitted and how many we have gotten on average and asked if he can address that a bit.

Mr. Gillespie commented that in terms of the frequency of the STEAP Applications that we have requested, we have been very fortunate until recently actually receiving funds for all of our previous applications. He explained with this application we are asking for authority to apply for a second-time request. We didn't get rejected the last time but they just didn't fund it the first time around. He explained in the past, we have received funding for the streetscape and Town Hall improvements out front and have received two previous applications for façade funds and Millwoods Park as well. The STEAP program has been pretty generous to the town over the last few years.

Mayor Montinieri commented that Councilor Martino has addressed some of these questions and asked if he could maybe weigh in on some of Donna's points.

Councilor Martino stated that as far as the priorities, they went through each grant with the department heads involved, which was the most important priority. Also they asked the Manager to give us the priority. The committee went along with their recommendation for the order of the list. He stated that the Staff did a good presentation telling us exactly what each grant would entail and what we could get out of them.

Deputy Mayor Barry commented that all of these as Donna said are important projects and really good projects. The first project, however, the first grant has the potential to bring in more tax revenue obviously as well so I think there is sort of the bang for the buck there as well that I

thought made that a high priority certainly to the extent we can help some development on some of these long-vacant properties on the Silas Deane Highway, it's important to do so. Deputy Mayor Barry commented that from his view, he thinks that one sort of jumped to the top and then the other two, it's a close call and that was just his thought process, but again, relied on staff recommendation as well.

Councilor Manousos commented to Peter he thought in our Infrastructure meeting he mentioned we have never submitted three before. Mr. Gillespie responded that we have never submitted three at the same time before, that is correct. We have submitted two before and we were fortunate in one year to get two. One was smaller than the other but no we never filed three at the same time in the same fiscal year. Councilor Manousos commented that he thinks it is unlikely that we are going to get three STEAP grants especially considering the state of the State. He stated that he agrees with the first one, the façade loan demolition funds and thinks it is the biggest bang for our buck. Councilor Manousos stated that we should limit this submission to either one or two and the second one for him would be the Solomon Welles House as there is so much public use and there is much more of a need. He stated that the second one on the Standish House is something that he thinks we need to first ask the larger question which we did ask in an Infrastructure Committee meeting before, and that was something that the Town Manager did also approve and we were going to look at whether we should even own this building to begin with but that seemed to have been just shut down and that conversation never went anywhere. Councilor Manousos stated that he thinks people in the public would be very disappointed to know that there is a 50-year lease on that building from the town to the Historical Society for no other purpose other than to fund it. He stated that there are certainly other mechanisms that we can provide through our budget process to take care of some of that to keep the Historical Society whole but to put this property in private hands. He stated that right now what we are saddled with is, the town is saddled with all the repairs and maintenance that are needed on the building—all the capital improvements and I'm not sure that the items that are subject to the STEAP grant are actually not necessary but I don't know that we are obligated to do it so I'm afraid that is also going to open up, it's a slippery slope I think. He stated that we never really had that discussion and I think that should be had here to see where everybody feels the long-term position of the town is on this property. He stated that maybe the Mayor and Gerri could speak to it because that 50-year lease was created by you guys.

Councilor Roberts commented that she has not been involved with the Historical Society until recently but believes that he was the liaison prior to her. She stated that she doesn't think this is just an item that we can bring up at town council and decide this is the way we want to go without having significant input from many parts of the community. She added that it would affect how the Historical Society operates and would affect current functioning business down there so she thinks it needs to be looked at carefully. She stated that if people don't think this is one of the top priorities in terms of funding with the STEAP grant that is one thing but to just decide maybe we'll just sell the Standish House, that is not acceptable to me and I think it would need a lot of analysis before I would even be willing to consider it.

Councilor Manousos commented that he agrees with her and thinks that is why it should be

removed and doesn't think we should commit the town to anything at this point, especially knowing that in the CIC budget that's been put in there without any discussion either for a ~~handy~~ *handicap* ramp. That is not a legal obligation of ours.

Councilor Roberts commented that if people's feeling is that it won't be realistic to get three STEAP grant proposals funded, that's one issue, but to make a public policy decision just on the fly tonight, I don't agree with it at all.

Councilor Manousos commented that is not what I am asking and stated that he is asking for maybe a reason why there was a 50-year lease to help give us some color on the whole background of it and figured that you were the best one to do that.

Councilor Roberts commented that she would be willing to look at it.

Councilor Manousos commented that he thinks it is important enough that he thinks we should hold off.

Councilor Hurley commented that he would agree that the Solomon Welles has been around long enough with that parking lot and if you go down there and I've been down there a few times where it's rained for three days and you don't realize when you pull in that you are stepping out in a foot of water while you are walking up. He stated there are a lot of people that rent it and they don't realize when all their family and friends come there that that's the situation that they are getting into because the parking lots down below and then they rent it and they go down there and it is just a mess. Councilor Hurley commented that he thinks the Solomon Welles House should be put as a higher priority.

Deputy Mayor Barry echoed what Gerri said and stated that we really have to be careful before we make any decisions regarding the Standish House building and stated that it's the first building we see when we come into the town. It's got some, obviously, historical significance to the town and it is a huge benefit to the town and is certainly something that we shouldn't do lightly in raising it and discussing it in this fashion. Deputy Mayor Barry stated that it has to be studied and it is something that we really should be careful with. He stated that the Historical Society does a ton of good in this town and we are talking about interpretive trail and all of that and it is something that is important to a town and what makes many people come to our town and is what many of us are proud of in our town and I think we really have to be careful about doing things without thinking them through.

Councilor Manousos commented that he agrees with him and we need to think it through and thinks we need to talk about it publicly. It is basically a commercial building and the Historical Society is, I mean there is a funding mechanism. The reason for that lease unless you are telling me differently, Gerri and Paul, is really to fund the Historical Society, which I agree is a great group. There is historical significance in what they do, but other than the shell of this building it is not really their core mission and if the intention is to fund them, then we can do that through the budget process, keep them whole, we could still put this into private hands. Councilor



Manousos stated that right now you have a tenant that doesn't have any equity in the building but yet is sinking money into it for no reason. He stated that he has expressed an interest in actually being able to purchase it. So not only would it get it back on the tax rolls, it would give an owner the ability to invest in it and I think any private owner is going to do better than the town can do in private ownership, that is not the mission of this Historical Society and as far as preserving what is left of the historic part of the building, which is really only the exterior, it's been modified several times inside, it's a bar and restaurant and if want to preserve the building that is why we have the Historic Commission and I think Michael Rell can speak to that pretty well of how that would protect that building. Councilor Hurley commented that he is not saying that we rush into a decision. It needs to be discussed publicly and people have to understand that there is this long-term lease and why we actually entered into it but I think the Historical Society should be here too and have an open discussion on it because there is a win-win opportunity for the town to shed itself of its obligations of the maintenance and have the building be owned privately and be cared for in a much better fashion than we could with taxpayer dollars.

Councilor Kotkin asked Peter Gillespie regarding the STEAP grant, if we put all three in with regards to the order does the State look at it and say because this is number 1 it's the town's first priority and this is number 2, the second and this is number 3, the third or do they just put them all equally into this mix along with other town's prospects and say, oh well, I like A, B, and C. If, for example, Solomon Welles is the third one does that make it the less likely to be funded or is it equally likely as the other two.

Mr. Gillespie commented that they didn't provide a great deal of explanatory background in terms of the request to prioritize but I would have to say that if we did rack and stack 1, 2, 3, the third choice would be the least likely to be funded or very unlikely to be funded based on past practices.

Councilor Kotkin asked Peter to go through staff's decision-making process on how to rank them.

Mr. Bridges explained that the façade loan program has a history of greater returns and it's a very popular program. He stated that we have people on a waiting list that want to see that money in the community so that was number 1. We also have an opportunity on the Silas Deane if we can get some money with demolition on redevelopment so that was the first priority as you heard this evening, the biggest bang for the buck. Mr. Bridges explained that with the Standish House, we have needs there in terms of making that an even more viable business. The return on investment there from the community to the Historical Society to the historic district is great if we do those modifications which would include additional internal ADA compliance, the elevator and so forth and site work so that one had significant return on investment. The Solomon Welles there are definitely needs there, but in terms of return on the dollar it had just a lower return than the other ones from a perspective of that. Mr. Bridges commented did we cost it out dollar-for-dollar, no but when you look at the investment vs. what happens and the State looks for economic development projects. Mr. Bridges explained that last year, they were interested in generators for emergency operations centers. This year, they refocused back on economic

development projects and with the Solomon Welles House, while the Farmer's Market provides economic development, on a scale of the three, it provided the least economic development of all of them. Now, it would be a tremendous asset to get that done for the town's use of that facility and the electrical work at the park to help with those functions down at the park, but from an economic development point of view, it doesn't stack up as high as the other two.

Councilor Manousos moved **"TO AMEND THE MOTION TO REMOVE NUMBER 2 AND SUBMIT ONLY THE TWO STEAP GRANTS, THE FAÇADE LOAN REDEVELOPMENT DEMOLITION FUNDS AND NUMBER THREE IMPROVEMENT TO SOLOMON WELLES HOUSE AND GROUNDS"**, seconded by Councilor Rell.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted. The motion failed 4-5-0.

Mayor Montinieri commented that one of the things that he thinks is important and he has talked to a couple of folks in Policy and Management as well as a couple of our legislative contacts about this. I think these are three pretty distinct projects that on their face probably will be evaluated independently and have different ups or downs and I think the Town Manager just appropriately outlined the thinking on the part of staff which I want to respect in moving forward on the vote with it as it is. He stated that it is his understanding by submitting these STEAP grants for these two other projects which obviously have great importance to our community, if one or two were to make it through that would be terrific. If one or both were not to get through, it provides some additional impetus for us to push for some support in the State level throughout legislative body who are asking us a little bit about as they go through the session, some projects that might be important to us. Mayor Montinieri stated that one of the things that might happen if, in fact, one of these or both do not make it or all three could frankly not make it based on the economy, but it does give us greater strength to say that we attempted one other avenue first, and therefore this becomes a priority even higher for one of those funding sources separate from STEAP. He stated that no doubt that all three of these have importance to us and the difference between the Standish House and Solomon Welles, for example, is probably relatively small when you talk about priority. He stated that they have different demands and different requirements so I favor all three at least going forward and I suspect Peter will be able to articulate those proposals on behalf of our staff in that fashion. Mayor Montinieri stated that the Standish House issue can and should be discussed at some point in some fashion and stated that it has been out there circulating for about a year that there was some thought or discussion about it and several groups in town including the governing body for the historic district as well as members who have been involved in the district have a very strong negative reaction to that but that doesn't mean that we shouldn't have that discussion and I think we should. Mayor Montinieri stated that he has some strong feelings about it himself and has communicated them to our Town Manager. He stated that the Standish House has a long history in town and suspects it would be quite a groundswell of resistance with the thought of selling off one of our crown jewels to the public but again that discussion could happen separate from this motion.

Mayor Montinieri called for a vote on the original motion to approve the STEAP grants to go forward.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted. The motion passed 5-4-0.

## BIDS

Councilor Martino moved **“TO REJECT THE BIDS RECEIVED FOR THE WILLARD POOL FILTER / PUMP / STRAINER REPLACEMENT”**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Barry.

Mr. Bridges explained that there was some money in the capital budget to upgrade the filters and pump systems at the Willard Pool and when the bids came in it was greater than the amount of money available. We have requested additional funding in this year's CIP to do the project and add monies to the project so we would reject these bids this evening and bid again this summer to do this. He stated that according to Kathy the filters would still work this year.

Mayor Montinieri asked when the bids come in and we are over what we had in the CIP budget, do we ever have discussion with the low bidder about how close we are and whether there can be any consideration given our limited budget.

Ms. Bagley responded that we did do that with the low bidder and the architect because the bids truly came in higher than we anticipated and a lot of it had to do with the equipment costs. They came in much higher than was originally estimated so it was actually the material that we were purchasing. Mayor Montinieri asked what the portion of the material was. Ms. Bagley responded about two thirds. Mayor Montinieri commented and their reaction was sorry, that's the number, we can't move it. Ms. Bagley responded not with the material because that was the manufacturer's price given to the low bidder. Mayor Montinieri asked Jeff about rebidding this at one point later in the summer. Mr. Bridges responded yes there is money in the CIP for additional work at Willard and we will use those funds to rebid it. He stated that these funds won't lapse so we will just add on. Mayor Montinieri asked the \$52,000 will still be there. Mr. Bridges responded yes. Mayor Montinieri commented so anticipating the number might come in the same we might move some funds after this year. Mr. Bridges responded there are some additional funds proposed in next year's capital budget through CIAC that we could use to fund the project. Mayor Montinieri asked Ms. Bagley if we could get one more year out of the current system if we are lucky. Ms. Bagley responded yes. We have been systematically upgrading the filter operations and this was just the next step.

Mr. Bridges commented that going back on the former STEAP there was a typo. It should be \$497,000 not \$496,000.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

## ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

**An ordinance amending the Other Post Employment Benefits Trust specifically as it relates to the appointment of Trustees.**

Mr. Bridges explained this is an amendment to the OPEB Trust Ordinance which when we adopted it originally in addition to the trustees, the town officer trustees, it provided for the appointment of two residents to serve on the Board of Trustees. At that time, it didn't identify how they were selected or terms of office. So this amendment provides for those specifics in terms of those two trustees.

Councilor Hemmann asked if we have any questions about this, can we submit those questions to Jeff so that we will be prepared. Mayor Montinieri responded absolutely.

**A resolution authorizing the submission of a Historic Preservation Grant (records management) for the Town Clerk's Office.**

MINUTES

Councilor Kotkin moved **"TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 17, 2014"** seconded by Councilor Martino. Councilor Rell requested to change the word "project" to "projected" and to change "physical" to "fiscal" on page 15 in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> lines of paragraph 3.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-1. Councilor Hemmann abstained.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Ave. commented that he was looking for a house last year in Newington and Wethersfield and noticed that \$200,000 in Newington buys less of a house than \$200,000 in Wethersfield. He also noticed that a \$200,000 in Newington, the taxes are about \$4,000 plus or minus. In Wethersfield they are about \$6,000. He understands that basically there is more industry in Newington so the taxes are a little bit offset. He also thought that because they have more land than Wethersfield the demand for housing in Wethersfield should be a little bit more than there. He asked why \$200,000 buys more in Wethersfield than in Newington, the only thing he can find is because of the taxes. He stated the taxes are too high in Wethersfield and urged the Council that when they talk about the budget, they should see what they can do.

Paul Copp, 100 Executive Square commented that he is disappointed that our new Finance Director has left and asked if Mr. Mayor or Mr. Bridges could tell everyone a little bit about him.

Mayor Montinieri responded that it wouldn't be appropriate during public comment but if you have some thoughts on him after at an appropriate time or you can make an appointment to speak with Jeff to share your questions with him.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Rd., commented that it was interesting tonight that we now have a new Finance Director and commented that he expected some fanfare on what his objectives and goals would be for us. He didn't hear anything about shared services between the Town and Board of Education side which would be a nice simple switch. Mr. Young commented that maybe not filling one of the retiree's positions is the way to go. He commented that he doesn't understand bringing Rae Ann Palmer on as a consultant for the radio system and suggested using another person with the town who is going to be here long-term to get involved in that work. He commented that maybe the Historical Society should be picking up the costs instead of the town paying for all the costs and stated that they can get grants and collect revenue. He stated that the taxpayers shouldn't be carrying everything like we currently are.

At 8:10 p.m., Councilor Kotkin moved **"TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION"**, seconded by Councilor Hemmann. (Councilor Manousos did not attend the executive session).

Councilor Manousos left after the general meeting.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

At 8:47 p.m., Councilor Kotkin moved **"TO EXIT EXECUTIVE SESSION"**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Barry.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:49 p.m., Councilor Hurley moved **"TO ADJOURN THE MEETING"** seconded by Councilor Deputy Mayor Barry. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk  
Approved by Vote of Council  
March 17, 2014

## **AMENDMENTS**

Page 3, change Standard to Standish.

Page 4, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, change Marshall to Marshal.

Page 8, change handy cap to handicap.

Change Gerry to Gerri throughout.